Tolfa Civita Vecchia
Sat 23 July 1870

My dear Tom

I was rejoiced to find that you are mending after such a severe illness worse than mine but now I will even hope that as I have at last picked up so you will pick up as somehow we are like each other even to the being ill almost at the same time & nearly in the same way but what grieves me is that your hands are affected like mine for my fingers are most cruelly out of drawing tho I can write as you see, but my 2d. 3d. & 4th are so, so, & my thumb I cannot bend!

Dear Maria has written me from time to time all about you — I am here for the 4th time presuming that I should by degrees find strength to ramble about the mountains & gain (not my former state! but enough to go on with — But now!!!

the approaching war threatens to take me
off my legs & fling me into active life to which
I am not yet equal — as yet we don't know
if the French troops will be removed from the Papal
States & the Italian republicans pour in
upon us! my Consulate to become once more
the place of refuge — I am a mere animal
of peace & cannot bear the sights of arms so
you may imagine how little this news agrees
with me — yet I like an active life provide
it is in doing good & not fighting

I dare say you'll have often thought of me
in all my difficulties about my daughter
sudden "splice" & my putting my hand into an empty
pocket — but I was saved by my having good
credit with my banker who at once advanced
me £100 the sum Eleanor demanded for her
fiddle faddle & really as the marriage is a not
good one & she the last of my chicks I will
complain altho' for the time I may chance
to be crippled — My excellent Doctor here

insists on my illness, being nought else than
simple rheumatism & so he will have me
walk myself off my legs - Then (between our=
selves) my inactive life had flung the fat
about me so that dear old London rags
would have no end of letting out, but here I
am walking down this ungentled fats at the
rate of 8 miles a day & hope to come out, not
sleek, but comeinable to my old cloathes

As yet I cannot quite dress myself, certainly
not put on my stockings - Every morning I
scrub & scratch myself with a large horse
brush made of small twigs which I think
does me great good, indeed I could not do at
all without it, but mind I never draw the blood
but I live on the scratching & hope at last "to
come up to the scratch" - How I should like
to pop in upon you & how I ought to have done
it on my daughters wedding, but fate carried
away my legs & she carried away my money
Ah! when shall I ever see you all again? if
ever!!

but as I am here to protect British subjects, do I must do it in any way I can in such a desperate state of things. 27th The English Frigate 19 Guns at Civita Vecchia is brought to protect the Pope in case of danger. But I dont know, certainly Napoleon put Rome in a state of great danger. I feel pity

29 The great heat seems finished & I trust also the great bustle of the political world. For I long for quiet & repose: yet the fighting is worse than ever & may seriously affect Rome. Altho the Romans are very discreet & resist every temptation to revolt you so intensely. That I fear never to finish this Epistle by Queens Messenger

Your loving Brother Joe